A Glimpse of the Private Nixon-

12/19/72

By Ronald Kessler
Washington Post Staff Writer

There's the Old Nixon and the New Nixon, Tricky Dick Nixon and now the Mountaintop Nixon. But according to a former babysitter for his family, there really is only one Nixon, and he is the same in the privacy of his home as he is on television.

That Nixon, says Clifford F. Moore, a gentle woman with crisp speech and a clear memory, has never been heard to argue with his wife and is as unflappable and pleasant sipping orange juice at the breakfast table as he is toasting Chairman Mao with Chinese liquor.

Mrs. Moore ought to know. For 10 years, she says, she was the Nixon family's primary babysitter, spending an average of three days a week and sometimes more than a week at a time taking care of the Nixon daughters, Tricia and Julie.

When Mrs. Moore began working for the family in 1947, she says, Nixon was beginning his first term as a California congressman. Tricia was 14 months old. Julie had not been born. When she left the family in 1957, she says, Mr. Nixon was beginning his second term as vice president.

What Mrs. Moore heard and saw in the interim gives some insight into the perennial question of who Richard Nixon really is. Veteran Nixon-watchers say it is virtually impossible to answer that question with any degree of certainty, and many White House staff members say the president's personality remains inscrutable even to them.

Mrs. Moore, who lives in Arlington with her husband, a retired government worker, did not seek to be interviewed. This reporter met her by chance at Jefferson Memorial Hospital in Alexandria, where she has worked in the pediatric ward for the past seven years as a nurses' assistant.

Mrs. Moore said she stopped working for the Nixons only because they needed a sitter who would live at their house, and although she periodically stayed overnight at the Nixon home for a week at a time, she said she did not want to leave her own family altogether.

The White House confirmed Mrs. Moore had worked for the Nixons and quoted Mrs. Nixon as saying

The human side of Richard Nixon

-by Ex-Babysitter

she remembers Mrs. Moore fondly.

Although she has pleasant memories of her experiences with the Nixons, she said she was unhappy that she was not invited to attend the President's Inauguration in 1969, and even more unhappy that a request she made in 1970 to see Julie and Tricia again was turned down by a White House aide.

"I was very disappointed," she said. "I've wanted to talk to them very much. I feel very close to them."

Mrs. Moore said that since the letter she sent to request a meeting with the two Nixon daughters did not state that she was their former babysitter, the aide who rejected the request probably thought she was just another member of the public.

If Mrs. Nixon had known of the request, she said, she feels certain it would have been granted.

Mrs. Moore said she was the Nixon family's primary babysitter and domestic employee for 10 years, and the White House also said she accompanied the family to California for several weeks in 1947. A man went to the Nixon home once a week to do heavy cleaning, Mrs. Moore said.

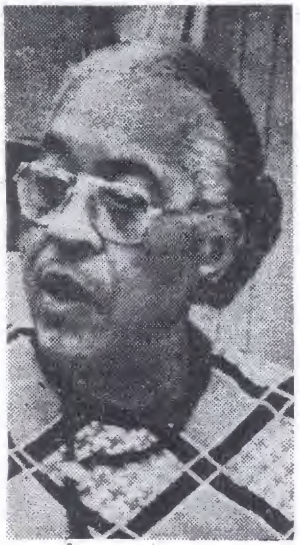
In the 10 years she worked for the Nixons, Mrs. Moore said, she never heard them argue.

"They could always solve their problems without arguments," she said. "I've never seen them unhappy or irritated or dissatisfied," Mrs. Moore added. Mrs. Nixon "always kept that same smile she has now," she said.

Furthermore, Mrs. Moore said, the family routine varied little over the years.

Mr. Nixon woke at 7 a.m.

See SITTER, C9, Col. 1



CLIFFORD F. MOORE
. . . with Nixons 10 years

SITTER, From C1

or 7:30 a.m., showered, dressed and came down for breakfast, which was served either in the kitchen or the dining room. He generally ate toast and coffee prepared by Mrs. Nixon and a glass of orange juice squeezed by Mrs. Moore.

"He always had fresh orange juice every morning," she said.

Mr. Nixon read the paper (The Washington Post) while eating breakfast, then went off to work. He was always friendly, Mrs. Moore said, but generally did "not have too much to say."

In the evening, she said, "He'd give you a quick smile and it's over, and he'd go into his study" where he read and wrote.

Dinner was served in the dining room and was generally prepared by Mrs. Nixon, whose staple dish was meat loaf with baked potatoes and vegetables. The family liked "just plain, regular food," she said.

"Sometimes he had a light drink" before dinner, Mrs. Moore said. "She fixed it. Sometimes he would accept and sometimes he wouldn't."

After dinner, she said, Mr. Nixon would give a little time to his children (15 or 20 minutes), and go in his study." The time with the children was spent reading stories or talking, Mrs. Moore said.

Mr. Nixon took off his tie and jacket in the evening, but Mrs. Moore said she saw him in pajamas only once—when he was heading for the shower.

"He was very particular in the way he dressed," she said. "He never wore shorts in my presence."

While Mr. Nixon generally spent evenings in his study, Mrs. Nixon spent most of her time reading and sewing in her bedroom.

Mrs. Moore said she believes Mrs. Nixon paid the bills. She also did the family shopping in the family's chauffeured car.

Mrs. Nixon often had a snack of Gruyere cheese and fruit before going to bed.

In the first of three houses that the Nixons occupied while Mrs. Moore worked for them, the Nixons slept together in a double bed, Mrs. Moore said. In the second, they slept in separate bedrooms. In the third, they had twin beds in one bedroom.

Although the family did not laugh a lot, "They were a happy family," Mrs. Moore said. "He's a very formal person and a very serious thinking person," Mrs. Moore said of Mr. Nixon. "He always seemed the same — never cross or irritated or anything."

Mrs. Moore recalled that when Tricia, then two years old, first saw Julie after her younger sister had been brought home from the hospital, she said, " 'Give me that.' "

At first, Tricia was "a little jealous" of Julie, she said. "She used to say, 'Clifford, your little friend is crying' — she didn't want her mother to go," Mrs. Moore said.

"We gave her the idea Tricia had to help take care of baby sister," Mrs. Moore said. Before they began going to school, "They began to love each other," she said.

Tricia insisted on going to sleep with her teddy bear, who was named Barr, Mrs. Moore said. Julie had a soft bunny that she took to bed with her.

With a touch of pride, Mrs. Moore said that when the children were young and cried before they went to sleep, "I always had a way of keeping them happy. I talked to them and got their minds on something else."

The children later spent a good deal of time playing with their cats, she said. Julie's was called Nicky, and Tricia's was Puff.

They also played outside with their dog, Checkers, who became famous when Mr. Nixon referred to him in a TV speech disclosing details of a secret campaign fund he had.

Like all children, the Nixon offspring spent a good deal of their time in front of the television set. Julie's favorite program was the Jackie Gleason Show, while Tricia's was Howdy Doody, Mrs. Moore said.

The children liked "weenie roasts" that Mr. Nixon made in the fireplace. Their favorite foods were friend chicken, fried potatoes and chocolate pudding.

When Mr. Nixon was elected vice president, Mrs. Moore said, a set of buttons was installed in the house to summon Secret Service agents, but the children seemed relatively unconcerned about their father's new status.

The day after the election, Mrs. Moore said, "Tricia said she didn't understand but anyway she liked it."